

Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ISO-00 MMS-03 SS-20 L-03 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 AF-10 EA-11 PA-04 PRS-01 IO-14

NSC-07 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /147 W
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R 251041Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8972

INFO SECDEF

USIA WASHDC

CNO

CINCPAC

CINCUSNAVEUR

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 03697

CNO, CINCPAC, CINCUSNAVEUR FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, IO, UK

SUBJECT: LEFTWING LABOR PRESSURE ON DIEGO GARCIA

REF: LONDON 3620

1. THE LABOR PARTY'S OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER, "LABOR WEEKLY," MARCH 22, CARRIES A STORY BY MARTIN LINTON CAPTIONED "DIEGO GARCIA - CRISIS ISLE" WITH THE SUB-CAPTION "LABOR'S PEACE POLICY FACES ITS FIRST TEST IN THE INDIAN OCEAN." IT FEATURES A PICTURE OF TAM DALYELL, THE MP WHO SPOKE IN THE COMMONS MARCH 21 ON THIS SUBJECT (REFTEL) AND UNDER HIS PICTURE IS THE QUOTE: "SCRAP THIS DEAL WITH THE U.S." THE TEXT OF THE FIRST HALF OF THE ARTICLE FOLLOWS:

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2. BEGIN QUOTE: A SMALL AND REMOTE ISLAND IN THE INDIAN

OCEAN CALLED DIEGO GARCIA WILL PROVIDE THE FIRST TEST OF THE NEW LABOR GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES ON SECURITY AND PEACE.

3. THE CONSERVATIVES HAD PROMISED THE ISLAND TO THE AMERICANS TO USE AS AN AIR AND NAVAL BASE TO SUPPORT THEIR GROWING PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.

4. IN FACT, THE TOP BRASS FROM THE U.S. PENTAGON LEFT LONDON ON THE DAY AFTER THE ELECTION, AFTER WORKING OUT THE FINAL DETAILS OF THE DEAL.

5. BUT IT IS NOT SIGNED AND SEALED AND THE LABOR CABINET WILL BE ABLE TO CALL IT OFF IF IT WANTS TO.

6. LABOR'S POLICY, CERTAINLY, IS TO JOIN IN (QUOTE)DISCUSSIONS ON THE RESTRICTION OF FOREIGN NAVAL FORCES IN ... THE INDIAN OCEAN ... TO ENSURE THAT THE INDIAN OCEAN DOES NOT BECOME A NEW BATTLEFIELD IN THE COLD WAR.(UNQUOTE)

7. AND THE GOVERNMENTS OF INDIA, SRI LANKA, PAKISTAN, INDONESIA AND AUSTRALIA ARE ALL OPPOSED TO THE DEAL.

8. INDIA'S PREMIER MRS. GANDHI DESCRIBED IT LAST MONTH AS 'MOTIVATED BY AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS AND POSING A THREAT TO THE SECURITY OF INDIA.'

9. AND AUSTRALIA'S LABOR PRIME MINISTER GOUGH WHITLAM SAID IN FEBRUARY: 'MILITARY EXPANSION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN CONFLICTS WITH AUSTRALIA'S LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES.'

10. THESE NATIONS, AND PARTICULARLY INDIA, WITH SUPPORT FROM THE SOVIET UNION, HAVE BEEN PRESSING FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO MAKE THE INDIAN OCEAN A 'ZONE OF PEACE' AND LABOR'S POLICY IS IN FAVOR OF SUCH A CONFERENCE.

11. TAM DALYELL, LABOR MP FOR WEST LOTHIAN IS LEADING THE OPPOSITION TO THE DEAL AND MADE A POWERFUL SPEECH IN THE COMMONS ON WEDNESDAY CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT

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TO SCRAP IT.

12. HE DESCRIBED IT AS THE 'THIN END OF A BIG WEDGE' THROUGH WHICH BRITAIN COULD BE UNDERWRITING A BIG EXPANSION OF THE AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.

13. HE WARNED THAT THE PROJECT COULD RAPIDLY ESCALATE INTO A NUCLEAR BASE FOR B-52 BOMBERS AND POSEIDON AND

POLARIS SUBMARINES.

14. THE FOREIGN OFFICE PREFERS TO CALL IT A 'SUPPORT FACILITY' RATHER THAN A BASE AND HAVE BEEN VERY KEEN TO PLAY DOWN ITS IMPORTANCE. AN OFFICIAL FOREIGN OFFICE STATEMENT THIS WEEK DESCRIBED AS 'UNTRUE' A REPORT THAT THE NEW LABOR GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY SUSPENDED THE

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INFO SECDEF

USIA WASHDC

CNO

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CINCUSNAVEUR

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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PROJECT.

15. BUT ALTHOUGH NO STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN YET, IT IS CERTAINLY TRUE THAT THE LABOR GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER THIS ISSUE AND COME TO A DECISION SOON, PROBABLY BY THE END OF MAY. END QUOTE

16. THE REST OF THE ARTICLE CONSISTS OF A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE US-UK AGREEMENT AND AN ALLUSION TO "SUSPICIONS THAT DIEGO GARCIA WILL BECOME, VERY SHORTLY, A U.S. NUCLEAR BASE FOR THEIR OPERATIONS IN THE WHOLE INDIAN OCEAN."

17. COMMENT: DIEGO GARCIA MAY WELL BLOSSOM INTO ONE OF THOSE EMOTIVE "PEACE" ISSUES SO BELOVED OF IDEALISTS AND LEFTWINGERS IN THE LABOR PARTY. TAM DALYELL, A CONFIDENTIAL

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RATHER EARNEST AND PLODDING CRUSADER, HAS LONG CHAMPIONED AN INDIAN OCEAN "ZONE OF PEACE" AND IS EXPECTED TO PURSUE THE MATTER IN AND OUT OF PARLIAMENT. ARTICLES SUCH AS THE ONE BY LINTON ARE BOUND TO STIR UP OTHER AGITATION.

18. THE "POLICY" OF THE LABOR PARTY THAT LINTON QUOTES IN HIS ARTICLE IS IN FACT AN EXTRACT FROM A STATEMENT MADE BY THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO THE 1971 ANNUAL PARTY CONFERENCE URGING THE WESTERN POWERS TO TAKE UP BREZHNEV'S INVITATION TO DISCUSS NAVAL RESTRICTIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE INDIAN OCEAN. THE SUBJECT WAS NOT EVEN MENTIONED IN THE COMPREHENSIVE FOREIGN POLICY DOCUMENT ISSUED BY THE LABOR PARTY LAST MAY.

19. OUR SOURCES IN MOD AND FCO SAY THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF FACILITIES ON DIEGO GARCIA HAS NOT YET BEEN RAISED TO MINISTERIAL LEVEL FOR APPROVAL. WHEN IT IS, THE ISSUE MAY WELL BE THE FIRST TEST, NOT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S "PEACE POLICY," BUT OF ITS DETERMINATION TO WITHSTAND LEFTWING PRESSURES FROM WITHIN THE LABOR PARTY.

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